



Andrew
Lloyd
Webber
Foundation



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RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED FOR THE AMERICAN THEATRE WING'S ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER INITIATIVE CLASSROOM RESOURCE GRANT

New York, NY (February 16, 2017) – The **American Theatre Wing** (Heather Hitchens, President and CEO) announced today the recipients of the **Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative Classroom Resource Grants**. Grant requests of up to \$100,000 were considered for K-12 public schools, with over 175 applications received, which requested nearly \$6,000,000 in total. This year's recipients are: **Broome Street Academy** (New York, NY), **Calumet New Tech High School** (Gary, IN), **Covington High School** (Covington, LA), **Fern Creek High School** (Louisville, KY), **Fort Walton Beach High School** (Fort Walton Beach, FL), **Gocio Elementary School** (Sarasota, FL), and **Sky Harbour Elementary** (San Antonio, TX).

"I believe passionately that the arts should be available to all young people. The grant proposals received revealed an incredible level of need in every corner of America. This is merely a start – and a thrilling one – but I've never been more aware of the challenge ahead," said **Andrew Lloyd Webber**.

"There is no more vital way to ensure the long term health of our art form than to provide educational resources for young students with a passion for the theater. The need is nothing short of overwhelming, and our goals are ambitious. We are filled with pride over this year's grants. Our focus is now on the expansion of this program that Andrew started, to cover even more schools across every corner of this country," said **Heather Hitchens**, President of the American Theatre Wing.

With the **Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation's** help, the American Theatre Wing is investing in Public Schools to help drama teachers get more of the resources they need to provide quality drama instruction in their schools. This project is an expansion of the work that the multi-Tony Award winning composer and producer has been doing to promote and fund arts education through his Foundation in the United Kingdom.

Through this Classroom Resource grant-giving program, funding is provided directly to under-resourced public schools to provide instruments, dance floors, lighting grids, and other necessary materials to help create new and enhance existing theatre programs.

These inaugural grants are part of the **American Theatre Wing's Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative**, a major new national initiative which received \$1.3 million in seed funding from the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation to promote diversity, equity, and access to the arts. The Initiative's focus is to bridge the gap between talent and opportunity, creating a stronger pipeline to the professional theatre for promising artists of all backgrounds—fostering a future generation of theatre makers and patrons that reflects the diversity and dynamism of America as a whole.

The three components of the initiative are annual **Classroom Resource Grants**, **Training Scholarships**, for middle and high school students covering the costs to attend summer study

and after school training programs and **University Scholarships**, providing financial support of \$40,000 over 4 years for students to pursue theatre studies at the University level.

For more information on the American Theatre Wing's Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative, visit <http://americantheatrewing.org/program/the-andrew-lloyd-webber-initiative/>.

Those wishing to join the Wing in their efforts to provide these critical opportunities for young people can contact the American Theatre Wing's Director of Development, Nicole Gardner (nicole@thewing.org.)

About the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation

The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation was set up by Andrew in 1992 to promote the arts, culture and heritage for the public benefit; since inception Andrew has been the principal provider of funding for all its charitable activities.

In 2010, the Foundation embarked on an active grant giving programme and has now awarded grants of more than US\$17m to support high quality training and personal development as well as other projects that make a real difference to enrich the quality of life both for individuals and within local communities. In the last two years, Andrew and his Foundation have supported various projects in the USA including Little Kids Rock and The Young People's Chorus of New York. The American Theatre Wing Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative will be the largest single grant awarded by the Foundation in the USA to date.

In 2015, the Foundation awarded over US\$2.3m in 46 new grants to organisations, made 17 grants totaling US\$1.3m to projects in their second and third year of funding and provided 30 musical theatre scholarships worth over US\$450k to young performers on the brink of their careers. The grants focus on the enhancement of arts education and participation, improving access to the arts for all, and increasing diversity across the arts, culture and heritage sector. www.andrewlloydwebberfoundation.com

The **American Theatre Wing** (Heather Hitchens, President and CEO) is dedicated to advancing artistic excellence and nurturing theatre's next generation: on the stage, behind the scenes, and in the audience. For a century, the Wing has pursued this mission with programs that span the nation to invest in the growth and evolution of American Theatre. Traditionally, the Wing has encouraged members of the theatre community to share their off-stage time and talent directly with the theatre audience at large--whether it was singing for the troops in the Stage Door Canteen of the 1940s, or sharing their stories on a podcast today. As the founders of The Tony Awards®, the American Theatre Wing has developed the foremost national platform for the recognition of theatrical achievement on Broadway. Yet the Wing's reach extends beyond Broadway and beyond New York. The Wing develops the next generation of theatre professionals through the SpringboardNYC and Theatre Intern Network programs, incubates innovative theatre across the country through the National Theatre Company Grants, fosters the song of American theatre through the Jonathan Larson Grants, honors the best in New York theatrical design with the Henry Hewes Design Award, and illuminates the creative process through the "Working in the Theatre" program and media archive. The American Theatre Wing has entered into a long-term partnership with *The Village Voice* to co-present The Obie Awards, Off Broadway's Highest Honor. Visitors to AmericanTheatreWing.org can gain inspiration and insight into the artistic process through the Wing's extensive media collection, and learn more about its programming for students, aspiring and working professionals, and audiences.

Follow the Wing on [Facebook.com/TheAmericanTheatreWing](https://www.facebook.com/TheAmericanTheatreWing) and [Twitter.com/TheWing](https://twitter.com/TheWing).

CLASSROOM RESOURCES GRANT RECIPIENTS

Broome Street Academy (New York, NY) for \$12,000 to invest in their theatre arts program. Broome Street Academy is a tuition-free public charter high school devoted to preparing New York City's most vulnerable students for a successful future beyond high school. BSA opened in 2011 and now has 330 students from all five NYC boroughs in grades 9-12. The Performance and Theatre program is built into the eleventh grade curriculum—giving students access to learn about various forms of theatre, practice their technical skills, attend professional performances, and take pride in creating their own performances and productions. Support from the Initiative will allow for expansion of the theatre program to produce work in a fully equipped space with working lights and sound. After a recent renovation financed through the sale of air-rights, the students have a theatre for the first time, but have no equipment for that performance space. This grant will allow students to fully explore the possibilities of the

theatrical arts, develop a range of performing skills, and stage new, powerful productions.

Calumet New Tech High School (Gary, IN) for \$15,000 to purchase and install lighting equipment in service of productions like this spring's *The Wiz*. Calumet New Tech High School serves a portion of the community of Gary, Indiana and surrounding area. This area is culturally diverse yet with a strong sense of community that blurs racial and socioeconomic lines. Due to reduced funding the building and theatre equipment have fallen into disrepair over 30 years of use. The administration has committed to increasing the inclusion of arts by adding full time music and theatre teachers. This year they are team teaching a musical theatre class with plans to produce *The Wiz* on stage, but don't have the resources to provide all the supplies needed. The current school administration recognizes that supporting the theatre arts serves as a catalyst for unifying the students and the community at a time when our nation grows more polarized. Theatre can be a powerful tool of expression, education, and unification. It can also provide inspiration for students to look toward and experience lives beyond their circumstances, and to strive to affect change through artistic expression. This once thriving school was a bastion of the arts at its peak, and with a new music and theatre teachers on staff, they seek to restore it to its full potential.

Covington High School (Covington, LA) for \$35,000 for technical support resources and new instruments. Located in south Louisiana, approximately one hour north from New Orleans and students are bused from a 30 mile radius. The culture and socioeconomics of the students changed dramatically in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Now a larger and more diverse population, parent occupations range from rural fishermen in Lake Pontchartrain to professionals. The Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance presents an average of nine theatrical productions annually. Licensing House MTI, notes Covington High as producing more than any other school in the United States. The grant will fund resources for every aspect of the theatre program, funding many resources to improve theatre instruction and allow every student who wishes to participate the opportunity to do so. There is especially high demand for Piano classes, however, the program struggles to keep enough instruments in working order. The program has 15 5-octave keyboards that have no pedals, and two 88 key digital pianos that are 20 years old. Students playing more advanced pieces need full touch sensitive pianos with pedals. This grant will greatly improve classroom instruction with equipment that is more closely aligned with current trends in theatrical equipment and technology.

Fern Creek High School (Louisville, KY) for \$14,000 to further theatre instruction – focusing on equipment to formalize learning in scenic, costume, light, sound, hair/makeup, and props for design and construction. Fern Creek High School (FCHS) opened its doors in 1923 and today, FCHS is one of only three high schools in the district offering the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Communication and Media Arts program, which includes Instrumental/Vocal Music and Theatre; among other concentrations. Also, more than 125 languages are spoken in this school's large and diverse school district. Technical theatre instruction is critical to prepare students for careers in the theatre. Currently, the only technical theatre instruction taking place at FCHS comes from reading a textbook, watching videos, and drawing designs for set, lighting, or costumes. Currently students do not have access to good, hands-on experience constructing the elements of technical theatre. By concentrating on the connections between design and construction in all disciplines connected to production, students will learn skills to allow them to work in a theatre, or other technical areas. Students will also be able to use these skills and equipment in the production of full plays to start building portfolios before they graduate, giving them better chances of entering a theatre program in college. They would also have the opportunity to pursue a career or apprenticeship in a theatre immediately out of high school.

Fort Walton Beach High School (Fort Walton Beach, FL) for \$22,000 to create a safer performance space for the school's active theatre program. FWBHS is located in the panhandle of Florida, on the Gulf of Mexico in an area where the school population is largely influenced by the military and its support industries. The school's auditorium facility was built in the 1960's, and as arts funding is a low priority in the district, the rigging system, curtains, and lighting systems are damaged and unsafe for the production level that the faculty and student body are capable of accomplishing. The program is committed to safety, quality performance, and excellence in theatre—even with limited resources. Every student in the program helps with the productions-- sets are built by the 13 to 18 year olds in the program under the direction of faculty. Teachers feel that ownership of the work makes a positive difference in the culture of the school. Fort Walton has a reputation as one of the strongest theatre departments in the state of Florida, producing quality plays that showcase the talents of students and brings value to the community--Producing challenging work that not only is entertaining and provocative, but that is also engaging and relevant to their audience.

Gocio Elementary School (Sarasota, FL) for \$15,000 to create a safer dance space for the school's active theatre program. Gocio Elementary School has invested heavily in arts

programming as a way to engage its diverse student body in active learning. It is the only Florida elementary school to offer drama, music, dance and art to every student, and has provided many professional learning opportunities to arts and regular classroom teachers in integrating arts into everyday classroom lessons. As a result, the importance of the arts at Gocio has grown over the years and they play an integral role in everyday instruction. These efforts have been recognized by The Florida Alliance for Arts Education which has named Gocio as a Florida Arts Model School since 2010. To engage its diverse student body in active learning, Gocio Elementary (the Owls) has made a significant investment in arts education and is the only district elementary school to employ teachers for Drama, Music, Dance and Art--who present a full-scale musical each spring. Theatre Wings will allow the Owls theatre program to spread its wings by providing a classroom dance floor. Many years ago, the classroom was outfitted with spongy mats glued to the concrete below. The mats are frayed and dirty, and need to be removed, but would leave the students dancing on concrete. The school's budget can't stretch to provide dance flooring. Yet this is critical if the dance instructor is to help students safely improve their dance skills and meet state arts standards.

Sky Harbour Elementary (San Antonio, TX) for \$27,000 to further improve their production values. Sky Harbour Elementary School sits on the Southwest side of San Antonio, Texas with a mission to provide the highest quality public education and instruction, so the students know what they can achieve, anything is possible, no matter what circumstances they may live in or face. There are many challenges facing these students as Texas has cut so much from education budgets that money for elementary theatre is just nonexistent. Sky Harbour is the only elementary school in their district that has a theatre program. The families of the students support the program through fundraisers, sewing costumes, building sets, and much more. The excitement amongst students and parents about learning about the theatre and careers in the field has grown since the program began. Students at Sky Harbour are offered only two after school extracurricular activities, one of those is theatre. The proposed production improvements in light and sound are important to the future of the program. The shows have casts of approximately 75 elementary students, but are presented to a school of 650 along with the community, parents, and other visiting schools. These performances are providing theatrical experiences to a community that wouldn't otherwise access it. The teacher believes they need to create the best productions possible to give the entire community an unforgettable experience that will make theatre belong to them for a lifetime.

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